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*O futebol e o processo da autodeterminação na Catalunha (2012-2021) :
encontrando lacunas na literatura.*

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Introduction

- ¹ The rising popularity of football is opening up new research fields for social and political sciences, considering how diverse roles are being prescribed to sports nowadays. These roles accentuate how versatile sports have become. Sports, especially football, may no longer have only enjoyment purposes but can be part of political identity formation. It is relevant to understand whether football fans' public opinion and votes regarding pro or anti-independentist processes are caused by the influence of their football club's politicization, considering the growing importance of football for politics.
- ² In 2018, I started researching two stateless nations' self-determination movements: the Catalan and the Scottish movements, which found their culmination in two very differently realized referenda but with one common denominator: the involvement of football and football fans. The research objective was to determine whether these regions' four major football clubs (FC Barcelona and RCD Espanyol from Catalonia and

Glasgow Rangers and Celtic from Scotland) had influenced their supporters' political decisions to vote in the referenda in 2017 and 2014, respectively. The findings of the research were incredibly inspiring, but they have raised more questions than answers. One of the study's significant findings was the confirmation of the marked diversion in votes of the RCD Espanyol fans and FC Barcelona fans. (Margaryan, 2019: 43) It confirms that there is a connection between the football club's identity and the political orientation of its supporters. Moreover, this showed less politicized football reality in the Scottish case. Another important finding revealed that the politicization of a football club is perceived as a negative phenomenon by both clubs in Catalonia. FC Barcelona fans claimed more strongly that their team is political, whereas RCD Espanyol fans considered their team apolitical (Margaryan, 2019: 44). These findings not only inspired me to continue investigating the chain of events involved in the battle between politics and sports but to expand further into the literature, where the gaps appeared. Some of the gaps were obvious, other, not as much.

- 3 The current paper aims to concentrate on Catalonia's derby as a case study. While looking at broader areas of bibliographical review within the literature concerned in Political Sciences, Identity studies and Sports studies in particular. The two major Catalan clubs have generated an incredible amount of historical, cultural, and political data. Interestingly, this relationship grows in time and continuously incorporates new dimensions, which is just one indicator of how powerful sports identity is here.
- 4 The article's objective is to summarize the theories in a working framework that will assist in discovering the research gaps in the literature regarding Sports studies and Political studies. It will also discuss the gaps and inconsistencies in academia between sports studies and, in particular, the study of self-determination cases of "stateless nations" and the role of football in this process. The objective of the research is to find out the areas in the literature that not only ignored the importance of sports as a social and cultural phenomenon with direct impact on society but also to envisage how it could potentially be applied into a current case study, such as the Catalan case explained above.
- 5 Chapters, each of which presents one theoretical direction or a discipline that we are interested in and where we search for literature's gaps concerning our research matter, compose our research paper. Firstly, we develop a discussion on sport as a research phenomenon and social studies approach it. Following this introductory section, we discuss the theories of politicization and their interpretation of football's politicization, and we talk about the relationship between sport-identity and sport-nationalism. Lastly, we look at a group of theories interpreting emotions and political voting, looking at how versatile political identity is, and how politicized can become emotions.
- 6 The choice of the topic can be justified by two reasons, the first one corresponds to my academic interests as a researcher and the second one relies on considering the topic's overall relevance for academia. For instance, sport is not just played, amusement, and leisure, and political identity is not an exclusively political construct. "Political identity" is shaped in part by "subcultural identity" and by "lifestyles" and other areas outside of traditional areas of "politics." Weberian understanding of a "lifestyle" (WEBER, 1972/1922) regarded it as being a result of life choices and life chances. Instead, a more modern interpretation given by Berzona and Genova (2015) would find that social identity nowadays is not based on wealth or materialistic goods but on access to a certain lifestyle. As for the personal interest, being Armenian, I have lived

the turmoil of the conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan, which makes me familiar with the self-determination processes of ethnic minorities and submerged nations. The choice of sport is also purposeful since I have spent my previous academic years studying sport and its implications for social sciences.

From the neglected non-serious to the newly-found serious: a brief look into the phenomenon of sports and game in social studies

- 7 Sports and the phenomenon of the game have been considered for quite a long time as non-serious research matters in the realm of social and cultural anthropology due to its "theatrical-like" appearance and its target on pleasure and leisure. Nevertheless, since the 1980s, first anthropological works focusing on specific aspects of sports started to appear instead of the more generic previous research choosing the play, although broad and narrow at the same time, not reflecting all the complexity of sports as we know now. Nonetheless, it was the first attempt to define play as a free activity that simultaneously involves secrecy and mystery and does not have any material gain. In Johan Huizinga's groundbreaking work *Homo Ludens: A Study of the Play Element in Culture*, one thing is noteworthy: he considers the play as a "not serious" activity. He is concerned about the "seriousness" that entered play, which is primarily visible in sports, where the voluntary act of imitation became a strict form of a game. According to J. Huizinga, sports cease to be played because of the distinction between professional and amateur. The play spirit of "spontaneity and carelessness" is gone due to the creation of a "true" player as opposed to the inferior casual one (Jeffries, 2010). We cannot ignore this concern because nowadays, with all the commercialization of sports, most notably its politicization and used by sports organizations in politics, underestimates the role of play and sport in our modern society. Therefore, play and its transformed and more organized version, sport is an imitation of social interactions that can be mediators in the interrelationship between politics and the supporters of a football team.
- 8 Probably such a foundation would make decades of anthropological work omit the study of sports and play as a serious activity with a social or political impact. Roger Caillois, on the other hand, presenting a more comprehensive view towards play and game, by including games of chance, mentions another characteristic of play: "play is an occasion of pure waste." With this statement, he continuous Huizinga's idea that there is no materialistic or worldly gain from play and that "property is exchanged, but no goods are produced" (Caillois, 1958). This last statement is quite interesting to discuss, especially since we will talk about football's commodification and hyper commodification in the later sections of this paper. It shows how probably "naïve" were the first theoretical works considering sports to be free of materialistic gain. One explanation could be that modern sports carry less of an element of play but continuously try to be manipulated to enter into a more materialistic state and leave the "theatrical-likeness." This talks about another polarization of the matter. If before we were to believe that sport is nothing than a game with no goods produced, with no economic benefits, nowadays the academia has an extraordinary focus on the consumer behavior of supporters and financial aspects of sports.

- 9 The early works depict play and game as valuable for the players only, as if they were the only ones affected by the play. The evolution of play and the establishment of modern sports have changed academia's approach towards sports studies. It is not a mere play, where the relationship between the players and the game ends as the game ends. It is not a wasteful activity, nor is it incapable of illustrating and shaping cultural patterns of a given nation, as articulately as economics, politics, or religious institutions do.

Sport as a cultural phenomenon: created by culture creating culture

- 10 Sport is culture; it is symbolic and it is shared. Sport is highly organized and categorized, such as its supporters and fans culture that formed around it. Much like a well-defined architectural design of constructing a complex building, each part of the sporting universe has its norms and regulations. When categorizing people, who regularly watch, visit, and consume their favorite football club as a commodity, we shall consider fans, supporters, and "partner" in this particular order. The relationships that originate between these categories of people are probably not very exclusive to football but to sports in general. What makes it special is the recent global popularity and worldwide spread of football. The factors responsible for the numerous benefits of football, such as physical, social, economic, or financial, and most importantly, this sport type do not require much equipment. It is not even dependent on cultural or social aspects of one's life since the social class is no longer a precondition for practicing sports.
- 11 Although sports and, in particular, football is now equally accessible for everyone, there is a difference in the degree of participation in the favorite team's life, as well as in the degree of involvement and self-identification with the team's values. We find quite limited research on the categorization of spectators' identification. One of the well-presented categorizations is Richard Giulianotti's model displaying four types of spectator identities: supporters, followers, fans, and flaneurs. According to Giulianotti, those four categories of spectators are situated on the axis of two binary oppositions: hot-cool and traditional-consumer (Giulianotti, 2002). Although Giulianotti presents a well-defined model of four different or ideal types of spectators, it takes an economical approach towards explaining spectators' relationship to their teams. There is no doubt about spectator behavior's economic, materialistic aspects since the hyper commodification of sports started in the 1990s. In the case of Spanish spectator culture, particularly in the Catalan case involving FC Barcelona and RCD Espanyol, the identification with the team by the supporters is not based predominantly on materialistic goods. The attachment to the teams comes from a sense of belonging to a community regardless of the economic gains. The latter consideration does not consider the fans/supporters, who are not Catalans, since "this belonging" in particular carries with it a certain obligation by the supporters not to be consumers only.
- 12 Michael Walzer, discussing the distribution of goods in contemporary societies, writes, "The community is itself a good - conceivably the most important good....but it is a good that can only be distributed by taking people in"(WALZER, 1983: 29). Taking into account this statement, our focus on the local supporters' community is justified, and most importantly, it allows looking beyond the economic criteria of football

attachment. The commodification of sports indeed made money the only criterion deciding on goods distribution in this particular sphere. However, when taken into account in the discourse of self-determination processes in Catalonia, there might be more powerful criteria than money itself: national identity and football club identity/belonging.

- 13 Continuing Walzer's discussion, I want to draw attention to the following statement about the membership of a given community, "...membership cannot be handed out by some external agency; its value depends upon an internal decision"(Walzer, 1983). I do not tend to generalize, since every community from a political community to our study matter, sports community has different operating mechanisms. Indeed, if one considers membership to a political community, the criteria of commitment, sharing, and exchanging goods would probably be more bound to materialistic elements. The beliefs and values would be much more pragmatic than in the case of a sports community. By sports community, here we shall imagine the Catalan case of sports culture, where the football clubs are standing much higher in value than other forms of social commitment. As mentioned above, these are exclusive members of the community; nevertheless, their commitment to the club will differ depending on their status as a spectator, from a supporter to a fan and a partner. What constitutes a gap in the literature in this sense is looking at the spectator culture predominantly from the economic perspective. In contrast, I propose to look at the behavior of Catalan spectators from a broader side. To understand their pro-independence and anti-independence opinions and what influences from those viewpoints, we need to redefine the criteria of spectator definitions existing in the literature.
- 14 Ponto Urbe2022-02-02T11:10:00PU_2022By delineating the spectator types "dominating" in Catalan sporting culture, we can better explain the links between football clubs' political influences on their supporters' political orientation. The Catalan self-determination process constitutes a highly interesting case, especially after the Catalan secessionist demands in Spain led to the October 1st referendum in 2017 and the two most important football clubs in Catalonia, FC Barcelona and RCD Espanyol, had two different positions regarding the referendum. Hence, having an underlying factor such as the position of an anti or pro-independence of a supporter necessitates taking a broader approach towards spectator typology. Giulianotti's typology differentiates supporters as the traditional/hot spectators, who present long-term formal and emotional commitments "resembling those with close family and friends" (Giulianotti, 2002: 33). An initial thought would put "partner" under this description since the relationship that this type of spectator builds with the team is special, is not based on material gains as a motive for membership (yet to be determined), but is it enough to influence the decision towards Catalonia's independence politically? On the other hand, a well-organized and robust supporter's community has its voice and it could potentially influence the team's management. Such as in the case of partners, when they participate in the election of a team president. The other type that Giulianotti distinguishes is the follower, who is also traditional but not as hot as the supporter is (Giulianotti, 2002). As we get to the next type of spectators, the relationship with the club becomes colder, more distant, and spectators' attachment to the team is getting further from a strong family and friends-like ties of commitment in the embodiment of fans and flaneurs. Sports spectators, especially fans engagement in the team-sports activities was discussed widely focusing on the actions such as attending team's matches, at the stadium, watching the games

on television, or purchasing team's merchandise (Hunt et al., 1993, Bristow and Sebastian, 2001, Funk and James, 2001). Other works discussing fans' engagement in team's life again focus on consumer behaviors (Wakefield and Fisher, 1998, Ahearne, Bhattacharya and Gruen, 2005, Walsh and Giulianotti, 2001, Yoshida et al., 2014), which does not explain in our case the reasons for being against self-determination processes or being in favor. As described by Borja García and Jinming Zheng, “civic engagement is built on national and local traditions”, (García and Zheng, 2017: 60) which explains to some extent our expectations from football clubs' supporters in a certain country. In countries, where the club facilitates the fans' engagement in its management and that involvement is being traditionally kept, we could potentially see more supporter's decisions affecting the clubs. The evidence of Spanish clubs such as FC Barcelona, Athletic Bilbao, or Real Madrid suggests that there is a unique experience in terms of supporters' relationship with their football clubs regarding the “freedom” of influencing the decision-making inside the teams' management. One of the reasons is the “partners” that in FC Barcelona's case recently proved to be as powerful as ever by bringing back openly pro-self-determination Joan Laporta as team's president in 2021 elections. According to García and Zheng, there is no unanimous approach in European football leagues towards the role of supporters in club management and decision-making might still be minimal in most countries. (García and Zheng, 2017: 279) This statement adds more weight to the importance of looking more into the different roles that football supporters have now in Spain and addressing the research gap according to the challenges of the time.

The politicization of football: politically charged sport or sporting politics?

- 15 The self-determination process that is going on in Catalonia, especially in independence campaigns by pro and anti-independence organizations and parties before the 2017 referendum, has shown that there is one constant element, which is much more relevant now, football and football supporter's involvement. My previous research proved the latter and found a well-defined link between supporters and their supported teams and their vote in the Referendum of 2017. (Margaryan, 2019) This link is yet to be determined whether the team's "politics" or other aspects cause it.
- 16 We are starting to dive into the "politicized" theoretical framework from researching the notion of politicization since it is one of the key concepts in our research project. Even starting with the word “politics” political scientists have struggled to find a definition that would become a meeting point for all the other interpretations. Assuming there are as many definitions as people who would define the word “politics”, none of those definitions can be characterized as the “wrong one” or the “correct one”. The conundrum over definitions continues with politicization as well. We can describe it in the most generic terms as moving an initially unpolitical issue or an institution to a political arena, or simply marking a “phenomenon as political”. (Kari Palonen, 2003: 183)
- 17 Ponto Urbe2022-02-02T11:26:00PU_2022Alongside the political definitions of politicization, for the study, it is needed to find anthropological definitions of the notion. It will encompass our understanding of how specific political processes and

certain actors use cultural phenomena, particularly football, for purposes beyond the cultural or sporting arena. Football not only constitutes an inalienable part of Spanish culture but it has been entangled in every possible aspect of life, including politics. A considerable part of Spanish and international literature has covered the long-lasting connection formed between Spanish people and football. Nevertheless, its relation to the football clubs' politicization and its effects on Catalonia's self-determination process is lacking current research. In these processes, it is not difficult to note that the main actor has become the individual and his actions, even though those actions would continue developing inside a societal structure. Society is the structure that would give meaning to those human individualist actions. David Easton's interpretation of politics and the introduction of value allocation systems theory for political science put individual behavior at the center of attention. (Easton, 1953) What defines then if politicization has occurred? Thomas Halper and Richard Hartwig question this as well, and wonder whether it is a "function of the individual's mental state...the ore interest in, knowledge about...politics, the more politicized he is?" (Halper and Hartwig, 1975: 72). In our case of the Catalan self-determination process, where football fans are involved as quite active actors, it emphasizes the behavioral part, more active involvement rather than just being a thought process. The football fan subculture has always been an actively tactile representation of fan culture, where emotions and actions go hand in hand. It would be wrong to separate these two and claim that in this process politicization occurs in the thought only or the action only.

- 18 In search of a comprehensive anthropological definition, we are looking at Balandier's (1985) anthropological definition of politicization, which he bases on evaluating the norms, values, and symbols that construct the behavior towards a given political entity. Following this definition, we look at Jacques Lagroye's insight into politicization, who defines it in terms of diversion of purpose and surpassing limits (2003). The first definition takes us back to the cultural essence of sports. In the same way, as sports structurally is not merely a competition between the best of athletes for a win or lose outcome, politics is not a simple competition for the same outcome. Both are based on norms, values, and symbols meaningful as long as people are interested in them and are interested enough to interpret them.
- 19 As a subdiscipline of anthropology, political anthropology presents a field that partook of the merge of politics with social and cultural phenomena such as power, people's interests, perceptions, identity formation, expression means, etc. Georges Balandier's landmark works *Political Anthropology* (1967) challenged the set perception of politics and political studies as uniquely tied to political institutions. He advocated for an ethnography of politics that would eventually constitute a break from the dominant theory of what politics is what we should use it for. His political ethnography addressed the variance of politics and its functions and acknowledged a significant form of politics. The latter would be characterized as "the political constituted in the social." (Greenhouse, 2017) The Anthropology of politics has shifted since to a more inclusive and flexible concept of politics, which is not strictly tied to political voting and party politics.
- 20 Where politics fails, football thrives. In a world where the old established political means do not always bring the expected results to politicians, football's arena becomes a well full of new, unused opportunities. From Francisco Franco to Yugoslavia's civil war, from Palestinian struggle for homeland through Palestinian football to the

Independence Referendum in Catalonia, all are significant events where politics failed to consolidate its powers otherwise, both consciously and unconsciously availed itself of this resource. Balandier summarizes the objectives that political anthropology should have, and one of them is that the political is not only the consideration of the institutions and actions, which are specific to it, but of all its components, and in particular the most underestimated ones: symbolic and ritual, verbal, imaginary, psychological, and theatrocratic. (Balandier, 1985)

- 21 Following Balandier's theory of politicization, we examine another influential French political sociologist's approach towards the politicization of football. Jacques Lagroye's inspiring definition of politicization builds on the idea of Balandier, who also considered "the social" to be an important component and that the "political" rises from this dimension and its actors' activities. According to Lagroye, politicization is a requalification of the most diverse social activities, which results from a practical agreement of social agents inclined, for multiple reasons, to transgress or to question the differentiation of activity spaces." (Lagroye, 2003: 360) Both authors emphasize the Ponto Urbe2022-02-02T11:39:00PU_2022requalification of social activities. In our case, such requalification would refer to giving a new meaning to a previously purely sporting activity of going to a stadium to watch one's favorite team's match. Of course, the entire process is not as simple as it seems. In order to construct a behavior followed by a political response, the social activities need to be filled with symbols and meanings that appear significant to those affected by these activities. Since football is such a powerful outlet, that not only gathers the feelings, emotional responses, and moods of fans and supporters, but it also can redirect it towards a particular political community. Lagroye's theory suggests two means, which describe how politicization occurs, and it applies to our study of football's politicization. The author introduces diversion of purpose and surpassing of limits. According to Lagroye, a statement is politicized when the statement's context is political or when it presents content related to the political field.
- 22 Contrary to this more traditional political qualification, politicization can occur when politicians such as elected officials, party members, members of the government, or activists would intervene in a field that was not initially a political territory. Lagroye characterizes this as "détournement de finalité", which is "misappropriation or diversion of purpose," an objective political qualification (Lagroye, 2003: 365). The second phenomenon, a subjective political qualification, is derived from the perspective of the actors situated outside of the traditional political arena, which he calls "dépassement des limites", that is to say, "going beyond or surpassing "the limits" (Lagroye, 2003: 360). This politicization of a given discourse, in this case, happens when an individual or a group either qualifies its action as political or is qualified as political by others. While talking about the diversion of purpose in the case of FC Barcelona and RCD Espanyol, we can take into account not only politicians's diversion for their political purposes but also football clubs' diversion of their sporting purposes in entering the political arena and leaving the competition arena. In the case of politics, involvement in sports can be seen as means to mobilize people and find a new way of spreading very concrete ideas aimed at a very realistic aim, in our case, ideas of self-determination with an aim to become independent. In this discussion, we could safely say that politics, like any other sector of social activities, has the right to search for ways to evolve. However, the underlying reasons can be harder to track in the case of football. Thus, what is the motive of a football club to be involved in politics? We could

ask the question in a reverse way: what is the motive of the supporters to "drag" the club into politics? It is yet to be determined whether the club is the one that follows the followers' and supporters' political views or the supporters are the ones following the club's political agenda. When looking at Lagroye's notion of perspective of surpassing, we can find evidence of football administrative pursuing political careers or football club owners searching for public funding and political support. (De Waele et al., 2018) Finally, evidence of surpassing limits is the way football fans or supporters show support to a political cause, make a political declaration, or demand using football club symbolism, equipment, and space, such as stadium and football games.

- 23 A very delicate and essential part of the theoretical framework that we would like to shed light on is the statement and acceptance that the literature has covered quite a wide stance on the politicization of football and sport, mostly in more obvious and evident ways. It must be pointed out that the theories and the literature overall about the ties between politics and sports previously neglected to take into account the merge of politics and sports with self-determination processes. The latter is true especially concerning how fans and supporters are affected by it. How does this duo affect supporters' perceptions about self-determination processes in the regions where this is a question at stake?
- 24 In an article on social change triggered by football about Latin American societies, Tamir Bar-On mentions that there is a certain distinction on how the Latin American countries and European countries experienced social change with the professionalization of football clubs and football itself. Looking at Latin America, including the 1970s dictatorships, he argues that football mainly was directed to reinforce nationalistic, authoritarian, and specific notions of identity and culture. (Bar-on, 1997) He finds the curious difference between Latin America and Europe in the politicization degree of football to encourage and prompt social change. While in Latin America, professional football clubs, or their players, their fans have a short-term influence on social and political concerns, and the politicization is issue-oriented and non-systematic, in Europe, there is a stronger politicization of football by both football clubs and supporters (bar-on, 1997). Nevertheless, he concludes that we notice the same failure of politicized and professional football in both continents to tackle broader societal issues and reinforce a systematic social change in Europe. In the case of the Catalan self-determination process, however, we can talk about a rapid rise of self-determination issues due to the more popularization of professional football. We are talking about, in particular, the popularization of the FC Barcelona brand and the evidence of the combination between the "omnipotent FC Barcelona" and the high interest in the independence of Catalonia. However, where is RCD Espanyol in this little tango?
- 25 French sociologist, philosopher and, Ponto Urbe2022-02-02T12:11:00PU_2022anthropologist Pierre Bourdieu attributed great value to the sport's role in studying social change, where the sport itself represented a crucial instrument for a social change to happen. He described sport as "a set of ready-made choices, objectively instituted possibles, traditions, rules, values, equipment, symbols, which receive their social significance from the system they constitute". (Bourdieu, 1979: 209) He also notes that each of these sets inherits a part of their substance and characteristics from history. This shows once again that we should look at the Catalan case as a unique one, where the history and modern societal changes

revealed sport as a new instrument for social and political change. When discussing Bourdieu about the elimination of the boundaries between sport and politics, we should take into account one important point. The interference of sport in business, finances, economics, and finally in politics was a novel phenomenon for the time. Thus, sport's politicization has been considered the result of the interference by politics into the sport and not vice versa. Whereas nowadays, in the Catalan case, we are talking about the football clubs themselves being incorporated into politics. That is to say, if before the process was politics into football, now it is clearly not as linear.

- 26 On the other hand, it is interesting to think about the following: the use of sports by the authorities of a certain political ideology. Is it a direct manipulation towards the masses, or is it simply a means of self-expression by the community thriving to a new type of statehood? If we assume that the "masses" or the part of the population that accepts and sees football as a way of making their voices heard, would not see it as manipulation. Furthermore, the state authorities would continuously use the power of unity of football to bring together everyone around the same goal. We are dealing with an ambiguous situation here, however. Since it is a sport that has always been praised for bringing people together, it is currently not only does not bring the people together but also has divisive effects. T. Bar-On discussed a similar issue in regard to the use of football for nationalistic purposes in Latin American countries by dictatorships and authoritarian governments.
- 27 The apolitical commitments or ways of expression inside any given society are quite tightly connected to politics in fact. However, they are not always realized with a political aim in mind. That is to say, the activists in a seemingly non-political activity are not necessarily pursuing it consciously. The phenomena of politicization or de-politicization can occur without being incorporated or placed into discourse or claim as such but on the contrary. (Arnaud; Guionnet, 2005) We must contest first whether the political action or the politically charged action is coming from the inside of the actors' group, or it is put upon them from the outside world actors such as journalists, politicians, etcetera.

A discussion of sport-identity and sport-nationalism relationships: Finding gaps in the literature

- 28 The questions of nationalism and identity are complex and thoroughly researched by different disciplines of social sciences, from history to anthropology. The current work does not intend to in-depth tackle the study of nationalism or national/regional identity since it is not our primary objective. Still, the study object requires a discussion of the links between sport-identity and sport-nationalism. Since it is not an easy task to observe nationalism or national identity, we turn to several fundamental works in social sciences that represent a comprehensive view towards ethnicity, nationalism, and the relationship between identity and sports. One of those works belongs to Eric Hobsbawm, "Nations and Nationalism since 1780: Programme, Myth, Reality", where he notes that "nation-watching would be simple if it could be like bird-watching." (Hobsbawm, 1990: 141) According to him, nationalism came first, to which later joined nations, a newer era phenomenon. In his analysis of nationalism, he includes different elements such as economics, politics, language problems that were connected to "inventing traditions." He invokes the element of Sport in discussing

nationalism post-1918, where further observation shows that nationalism is not disputed anymore in the areas of "frontier disputes, elections/plebiscites, and linguistic demands." (Hobsbawm, 1990)

- 29 Thomas Eriksen continues Hobsbawm's narrative by considering Sport as having a ubiquitous presence in most contemporary societies and having a nationalist focus more often than one might expect. Discussing cultural practices such as music or folk tales, public celebrations, and sporting events as symbols, Eriksen admits that their meaning changes once they enter the nationalist discourse. Moreover, indeed, we can see an entirely defined relation to the role of sports in the Spanish identity and the whole nationalistic discussion. The creation of nationalist sentiment and a nation is not always connected to a face-to-face interaction. Here we follow the path of Benedict Anderson and Ernest Gellner, where one believes in nations being "imagined communities" and the second in inventing nations with the help of nation-states. What strikes us the most is Eriksen's argumentation of how a nationalist group can be created through symbols and social/cultural practices. Referring to sports, he mentions that a simple introduction of symbols stressing its existence as opposed to "the other" is not enough to create a group since a potential group with nationalist sentiments might be activated rather than created through symbols.
- 30 Ponto Urbe2022-02-02T12:27:00PU_2022Spanish society, and in particular Catalan reality, shows that the multiplicity of national and sports identities is present. Thus, the versatility of identities in Spain could arguably be challenging to underpin if we do not consider the role sport has played over decades. The literature has omitted to consider how powerful football was in the recent decade in determining the new direction that the self-determination processes in Catalonia took. Unfortunately, the existing literature lacks thorough and timely research on self-determination processes and the use of Sport to affect the supporters, which limits a further understanding of the politicization of football extensively. In particular, research regarding the politicization of football in the scope of self-determination processes in autonomous communities of Spain (Catalonia, Basque Country, and Galicia) was focused on the study of fan identity-football club relation (J.Tuñón, E Brey (2012), R. Spaaij, C. Viñas (2013). The role of Sport in the formation of Catalan identity is relevant: R. Llopis-Goig (2017), L. Desfer Edles (2016), J. Hargreaves (2009), J. Tuñón, and E. Brey (2016), C. García (2012), H. Shobe (2008) among others. One of the main gaps in the literature regarding identity studies is the absence of a new perspective towards supporter engagement, which is related to the sports identity and regional identity presentations at the same time. On the other hand, the research of this set of football clubs in this context has not received enough or any attention since the referendum of 2017, and probably even before. Just as the media disregards RCD Espanyol and focuses on FC Barcelona's success and failure, the literature has predominantly shown interest in studying the role of "more than a club" of FC Barcelona, rather than the pro-independence and anti-independence bubbles formed around the two teams.
- 31 Another group of theories considered under-studied in terms of the newly awakened Catalan self-determination process are self-determination theories and studies on nationalism, as well as the history of Catalonia. In the words of Montserrat Guibernau, the main concepts here we are working with are "nations without states" or, more commonly, stateless nations, which corresponds to Catalonia as a territory with a unique sense of national identity and "the explicit wish to rule themselves"

(Guibernau, 1999). Other works related to the nationalism question in Catalonia that we consider are Balcells (2003), Fabregat (1984, 2004), and others, where we find the historical roots of the formation of Catalan identity. The latter is important for tracking the incorporation of football and sports identity into the Catalan identity to be able to explain recent changes and "radicalization" of sporting sentiment to the extent of politicization.

Politicized emotions and sporting emotions: joining two "unserious" concepts for research, emotions, and sports

- 32 The last but equally important group of theories are studies on emotions and affective politics. As a proxy of national identity, in some cases, even replacing a nationalistic feeling, football represents the prism through which people share their emotions, and it can redirect them, even politically.
- 33 The self-expression through football to a degree seems unproblematic; it is the easier way of showing your belonging to a national entity. It is easier since it revolves around a sporting event assumingly clear of any political interference. Nevertheless, since football is not immune to the latter, in a way, its use in nationalistic movements brings unexpected results. It plays with the expressive behavior of the fans, the supporters and redirects it to a certain angle depending on who is behind this.
- 34 Since the referendum of 2017 happened once, it is difficult to claim that the expressive voting based on personal emotions of the football club fan-voters was based on solemnly this specific referendum or they would vote the same under different circumstances just because they support this or that football club.
- 35 One of the primary sources here is J. Goodwin et al. (2013), where the authors stress the importance of feelings and emotions for a group, since "the strength" of identity, even a cognitively vague one, comes from its emotional side"(Goodwin; Jasper; Polletta, 2013). Unfortunately, social and political studies did not attribute a great significance in explaining social or political movements through emotions during most of the twentieth century. Since "emotions do things and work to align individuals with collectives" (Ahmed, 2004), here is where we find links to our study. Emotions can be expressed outside of the political spectrum and still mean something for the political arena. The study of Malhotra et al (2011), on the effects of personal emotions on political decision making, holds great relevance for the current study matter, since it claims that the study unit football club's games outcomes significantly affect people's emotions, and they are entirely unrelated to public affairs. Thus, the authors stress the fact that "no government response would be expected in response to game outcomes and the public would almost certainly not relate them to incumbent performance" (MALHOTRA; HEALY; HYUNJUNG MO, 2011: 2). Nevertheless, although at the beginning pretending to be unlikely, the reality is the complete opposite. The matches of their favorite teams do not only affect the voters on a personal level, but also the game outcome results in expressive voting. Although the study found that the post-elections games did not affect voting behavior, in the Catalan case, we observe something different. Since the rivalry between RCD Espanyol and FC Barcelona is continuous, since the self-determination process is not a static, each derby between the two teams affects

it constantly. In the same way, each match at Nou Camp is an event that can be and was used to show belonging to the pro-independence movement.

- 36 As we noted earlier, sporting events usually would not get any government response or any political response for that matter. It is not likely to expect a political response after a football match or over the activity of any football club if they are not actively perpetuating their involvement in any kind of political event.
- 37 Putting the expressive voting theory and the theoretical implications of this work into our frame gives us a conducive instrument to generating a theory fitting our case. In the same way as according to expressive voting theory, people are influenced by their emotions; whether those are happy or sad, they make a vote also derived from events outside of the political spectrum. While voting for a political party or a politician is a more precise activity and can be tracked easier whether a team's victory or defeat influenced people's votes, it is not as simple in our case. Finding out or even more, asserting that events outside of politics affect people's perceptions on political matters such as self-determination and pro/anti-independence movement takes a more qualitative analysis and more work with the actual fandom of the football teams. Since these theories consider only political voting as a process affected by events outside of politics, the current work is aiming to alter it to a new dimension by including politically keen perceptions and decisions to be against or pro-independence.
- 38 Because football is such a fundamental and core element in the socio-cultural sphere of Spanish people, it shows that its effect on people's judgments and perceptions could make it difficult for them to separate the expressiveness of being a fan and having a political opinion whether Catalonia should be independent or not.
- 39 The way the voting by the Catalans in the Referendum of Independence in 2017 took place could be analyzed through the expressive voting theory. Importantly, as Laband notes, the political expressiveness in voting should not be the only variable that is taken into account while analyzing the results (Laband, 2009: 106). People can be motivated by different socio-cultural and, most often, non-political events and experiences. Their performance in political voting is not always a result of purely political reasoning. The football clubs of Catalonia fueled the expressive voting in the case of Catalonia's independence referendum. To a higher degree, rather than RCD Espanyol, FC Barcelona would not stay impartial in the self-determination process. As supporters and fans in football have always stood out by their expressiveness, whether at home or in the stadiums cheering for their favorite team, they could easily be "tangled" into the web of expressive voting. In the case of FC Barcelona, the team's excessive engagement in political matters would not rule out its direct effect on the voting of its supporters.
- 40 Voting is indeed a very political, direct, and interestingly enough, is not as individual action as it seems, rather than a collective decision-making activity done individually. Since for every election, to be successful, the candidate or a group of candidates should receive the most of the votes, the voting result becomes a collective will. To collect this will, electoral campaigns are conducted. Each of these campaigns carries messages and communicate certain truth and realities that attract potential votes. How does this apply to our case?
- 41 According to low-information rationality theorist Popkin, one of the most relevant authors working in this realm, voters use low information rationality that they obtain from media outlets or interpersonal social interactions during their everyday lives to

make an electoral choice and form an opinion about the politicians (candidates in case of voting). People would use short information units or short-cuts to define whether they find a particular politician credible or not through activities they realize in their daily life. For example, when homeowners learn interest rates, they learn about prices and inflation and judge how the economy is doing (Popkin, 1991). The theory of low information rationality has been used primarily to explain political voting. Nevertheless, there is a potential that it applies to a broader range of phenomena, such as people's predisposition of being pro or anti-independentist in the case of Catalonia's football supporters. It should be noted here that since football is a significant part of their lives and if one is a devoted supporter of whether FC Barcelona or RCD Espanyol, he or she should be inclined to believe the information coming from the club. Thus, the credibility of the information, whether politically charged or not, coming from an entity with which one shares a deep personal connection, is not contested. Since the connection that supporters establish with their favorite clubs can go beyond the simple fact of watching the game at home but going to the stadium to support or participating in the election of high officials in the club, people would continue to associate themselves with the club and its symbolism.

Conclusive remarks

- 42 Catalan self-determination process has taken a new turn since the 2017 referendum of independence, where the Catalan community was divided into two political sides. Football clubs such as FC Barcelona expressed an unhidden political, social, and emotional support to the right to vote in the referendum taking one of the prominent roles in these events. RCD Espanyol's response was less emotional, less politicized, and relatively neutral. These sentiments were expressed in the votes of their supporters in the referendum as well. Football clubs' influence nowadays on their supporters and fans is growing undeniably, passing from traditional influence spheres to not-so-traditional ones, such as political.
- 43 The current paper is aimed to discuss the main theoretical approaches for the study of the links between football and the self-determination process in Catalonia, in particular, to highlight previously disregarded literature pieces in regards to football and politics research. The paper discusses theories of politicization, self-determination theories, as well as theories of emotions, and it looks at the theories defining types of spectators, which is a key in the Catalan case.
- 44 The literature review of the research project has revealed several important gaps and shortcomings that appear in academia regarding the topic of football clubs' supporters' political orientation in self-determination processes in Catalonia. Firstly, there is a need for a more timely politicization theory, which will work in the case of football clubs and their spectators' politicization. Currently, the main dimensions that academia has studied or continue to explore the politicization of sports is quite one-sided. When looking at politicization, the focus is on the political institutions or politicians intervening in sports, pressuring sports and athletes. The objective is to have a more comprehensive look at this and to look at the politicization from up to bottom and from bottom to up through literature that encompasses different aspects of football and politics from emotions to political voting. Supporters and fans nowadays

are actively involved in the lives of their favorite teams, and we cannot deny that some of them could become influential enough to change the team's once apolitical stance.

- 45 Another critical remark is regarding the theories of self-determination that, in most cases, do not take into account the sports factor. The rapid rise of spectator culture and its powers, alongside the hyper commodification of football, create massive opportunities to become a locomotive for social movements, such as the self-determination process in Catalonia. The current state of events shows that national identity itself and nationalism are not the only driving forces towards self-determination sentiment, as well as towards building a movement with the aim of final independence. This brings us to the changing roles of FC Barcelona and RCD Espanyol spectators, where traditionally, one was more prone to having pro-independence viewpoints, and the other was more anti-independence and pro-Spanish.
- 46 The spectator culture in Spain, especially in the face of long-time supporters, has created a subculture with its own rules and symbolic significance. The study necessitates a new explanation of spectator identities that would fit the Catalan sporting reality better and encompass not only the economic side of supporting the team but also the symbolic and political sides that might drive towards actual actions, such as political voting or having political preferences.

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ABSTRACTS

The article will present the literature gaps in Political Anthropology and its relation with sport, particularly football, focusing on the Catalan secessionist process in Spain. In the self-determination process that is going on in Catalonia since 2012 - especially in independence campaigns by pro-and anti-independence organizations before the 2017 referendum - football

and football fans are constant elements of the movement. In particular, the two key football clubs of Catalonia found themselves in the center of the movement, FC Barcelona and RCD Espanyol. The article is interested in analyzing the degree of politicization of football, looking at the performance of these clubs in the self-determination movement. It aims at finding out the theoretical areas that lack current research in the following aspects: the politicization of football, sports identity, and emotions and political voting. This article will contribute to the understanding whether there is indeed a connection between being a football fan and having particular perceptions of supporting or not supporting a self-determination claim. Understanding that the politicization process is not necessarily unique to classical political institutions and processes, we can also track how current political discourse evolves in other settings.

O artigo apresentará as lacunas na literatura na Antropologia Política e sua relação com o esporte, particularmente o futebol, com foco no processo secessionista catalão na Espanha. No processo de autodeterminação que está acontecendo na Catalunha desde 2012 - especialmente nas campanhas de independência de organizações pró e anti-independência antes do referendo de 2017 - o futebol e os torcedores são elementos constantes deste movimento. Em particular, aqueles dos dois principais clubes de futebol da Catalunha se encontraram no centro do movimento, o FC Barcelona e o RCD Espanyol. O artigo está interessado em analisar o grau de politização do futebol, olhando para a atuação desses clubes no movimento de autodeterminação. Busca conhecer as áreas teóricas que carecem de pesquisas atuais nos seguintes aspectos: a politização do futebol, a identidade esportiva, as emoções e o voto político. Este artigo contribuirá para entender se existe de fato uma conexão entre ser torcedor de futebol e ter percepções particulares de apoiar ou não uma reivindicação de autodeterminação. Entendendo que o processo de politização não é necessariamente exclusivo das instituições e processos políticos clássicos, também podemos acompanhar como o discurso político atual evolui em outros cenários.

INDEX

Keywords: self-determination, politicization, football, political identity, sport identity

Palavras-chave: autodeterminação, politização, futebol, identidade política, identidade esportiva

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